

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ARA-06 EUR-12 NEA-09 ISO-00 IO-10

CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SR-02 ORM-01 OMB-01 EB-07

AGR-05 TRSE-00 AID-05 /113 W
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P R 141230Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8915

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL UDORN

USIA WASHDC

USMISSION USUN

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AMEMBASSY RANGOON

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 PHNOM PENH 799

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, MOPS, ECON, CB
SUBJ: KHMER REPORT -- JANUARY 14, 1975

GENERAL

1. THERE WERE NO MAJOR KC INITIATIVES NEAR PHNOM PENH LAST WEEK AND THE SITUATION AROUND THE CITY IS STABLE FOR THE TIME BEING. FANK EFFORTS TO RETAKE TERRITORY AND POSITIONS LOST EARLIER IN THE OFFENSIVE NORTHEAST AND SOUTHEAST OF PHNOM PENH MET STIFF KC DEFENSES. THE KC ALSO RETAIN POSITIONS ON THE MEKONG'S EAST BANK OPPOSITE PHNOM PENH. DESPITE REGULAR ROCKET ATTACKS AGAINST THE CITY FROM THIS LOCATION, THE POPULATION HAS REMAINED RELATIVELY CALM AND MARKET PRICES HAVE BEEN STEADY. ROCKET ATTACKS AGAINST POCHENTONG AIR BASE HAVE CAUSED NO DAMAGE TO DATE AND THE FIELD REMAINS OPEN TO MILITARY AND COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC. FANK'S MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM NOW IS THE INCREASING KC PRESENCE AND LEVEL OF ACTIVITY ALONG THE LOWER MEKONG. WITH MOST OF ITS FORCES TIED UP AROUND PHNOM PENH, FANK HAS BEEN UNABLE TO REDRESS THIS SITUATION. UNTIL IT CAN, CONVOYS FROM SOUTH VIETNAM CARRYING ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES WILL BE UNABLE TO TRANSIT THE MEKONG TO PHNOM PENH. SIHANOUK CAUSED A FLURRY THIS WEEK FOLLOWING HIS CLAIM IN AN INTERVIEW BROADCAST OVER SWEDISH TELEVISION
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THAT SEVERAL TOP LEVEL GKR LEADERS HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH HIM AND WISHED TO JOIN THE GRUNK/FUNK SIDE. AMONG THOSE SO IDENTIFIED WERE HIGH PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT SIRIK MATAK, PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET AND FANK C-IN-C FERNANDEZ. SIHANOUK ADMITTED THAT HIS PROPOSALS ON ADMITTING GKR MEMBERS INTO GRUNK/FUNK HAVE NOT BEEN APPROVED BY HIS COLLEAGUES. THE KC IN-COUNTRY PROPAGANDA APPARATUS HAS NOT YET COMMENTED ON THE PRINCE'S DECLARATIONS.

POLITICAL (INTERNAL)

2. SIHANOUK'S JANUARY 6 CLAIM OVER SWEDISH TELEVISION THAT HIGH-RANKING MEMBERS OF THE GKR WERE PREPARED TO JOIN FUNK AND HIS SUBSEQUENT ELABORATIONS ON THIS THEME (SEE GRUNK/FUNK BELOW), BECAME SOMEWHAT OF A DOMESTIC POLITICAL ISSUE THIS WEEK. THE PRINCE CLAIMED THAT PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET, HIGH PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT SIRIK MATAK, FORMER CHIEF OF STATE CHENG HENG AND FANK COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GENERAL SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH HIM OR EXPRESSED A WILLINGNESS TO JOIN HIM. LONG BORET ISSUED A LOW-KEY STATEMENT WITHOUT REFERRING TO SIHANOUK BY NAME. SIRIK MATAK HAD NO COMMENT. ONLY FANK COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GENERAL SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ REACTED VIGOROUSLY IN A SHOW OF ANNOYANCE AT THE LOCAL KHMER PRESS FOR POINTING UP THE SIHANOUK INTERVIEW BY THE EXTENT OF COVERAGE. HE ALSO BLAMED THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION FOR FAILING TO KEEP THE MATTER OUT OF THE PRESS, THOUGH THE STORY ORIGINATED WITH AGENCE FRANCE PRESS. THE NET RESULT WAS THAT THE THREE LOCAL PAPERS WHICH PRINTED, AND IN AT LEAST ONE CASE EMBELLISHED UPON, THE STORY HAVE BEEN TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED.

3. THE LONG-AWAITED AND MUCH-DISCUSSED RESHUFFLING OF THE CABINET SEEMS TO BE TAKING PLACE IN BITS AND PIECES RATHER THAN ALL AT ONCE. THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT IS THE DEPARTURE FOR PARIS OF INTERIOR MINISTER MAJOR GENERAL EK PROEUNG. EK PROEUNG IS VARIOUSLY SAID TO BE ON AN OFFICIAL MISSION OR RECEIVING MEDICAL TREATMENT. WE UNDERSTAND HE WILL BE EASED OUT AS MINISTER WHILE HE IS OVERSEAS. MEANWHILE PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET TEMPORARILY HOLDS THE INTERIOR PORTFOLIO.

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COMMENT: THE DEPARTURE FROM THE CABINET OF TWO NOTORIOUSLY CORRUPT GENERALS, EK PROEUNG AND FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER THAPPANA NGINN (SEE KHMER REPORT OF DECEMBER 24, 1974), IS BOUND TO BE FAVORABLY RECEIVED. END COMMENT.

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P R 141230Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8916

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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4. LON NOL ADDRESSED 2,000 MONKS AT THE ANNUAL NATIONAL BUDDHIST CONGRESS ON JANUARY 12. THE MARSHAL REITERATED GKR ATTEMPTS TO FIND A PEACEFUL SOLUTION, REVIEWED THE 29TH UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, PRAISED U.S. ASSISTANCE, AND REFERRED TO PRESIDENT FORD AS "OUR GREAT FRIEND". HE ALSO ASKED FOR THE SUPPORT AND COOPERATION OF ALL BUDDHISTS IN THE DEFENSE OF FREEDOM AND RELIGION AGAINST THE "ATHEIST ENEMY."

POLITICAL (EXTERNAL)

5. THE NEW THAI AMBASSADOR TO THE KHMER REPUBLIC, THAILERNGCHAI CHARTPRASERT, PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS TO PRESIDENT LON NOL ON JANUARY 9. THE THAI EMBASSY HAS BEEN RUN BY A CHARGE FOR ALMOST A YEAR. THE AMBASSADOR WILL BE RESIDENT IN PHNOM PENH.

6. PRESIDENT FORD HAS SIGNED A \$75 MILLION SECTION 506 DRAWDOWN AUTHORITY FOR THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR CAMBODIA UNDER THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT.

GRUNK/FUNK

7. AFP STOCKHOLM ON JANUARY 6 REPORTED AN INTERVIEW
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WITH SIHANOUK CARRIED ON SWEDISH TELEVISION IN WHICH THE PRINCE ALLEGED THAT HE HAS HAD SECRET CONTACTS WITH, AMONG OTHERS, SIRIK MATAK AND FANK C-IN-C SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ. ACCORDING TO THE PRINCE, BOTH MEN HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN JOINING FUNK. SIHANOUK PROPOSED THAT "HIS GOVERNMENT" SHOULD BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE "RIGHT", EXCLUDING, HOWEVER, "TRAITORS". (BOTH SIRIK MATAK AND SOSTHENE ARE PROMINENT ON THE LIST OF THE OTHER SIDE'S OFT-REPEATED LIST OF SEVEN PRINCIPAL "TRAITORS"). THE PRINCE INDICATED SEVERAL OTHER TIMES IN THE INTERVIEW THAT MEMBERS OF THE GKR, FOLLOWING ITS DISSOLUTION, COULD JOIN THE OTHER SIDE. SIHANOUK ACKNOWLEDGED,

HOWEVER, THAT HIS IDEAS HAVE NOT BEEN APPROVED
BY HIS IN-COUNTRY COLLEAGUES.

8. ON JANUARY 10, SIHANOUK ELABORATED ON HIS TELEVISION
INTERVIEW. HE TOLD AFP PEKING THAT FORMER CHIEF OF STATE CHEN
HENG AND CURRENT PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET (MORE OF THE SEVEN
"TRAITORS") HAD ALSO SWORN FEALTY AND OFFERED TO JOIN HIM.
SIHANOUK CLAIMED THAT LONG BORET'S APPROACH WAS MADE THROUGH
ALGERIAN FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTEFLIKA DURING THE RECENT UNGA
SESSION WHEN BOUTEFLIKA WAS ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT. THERE HAS BEEN
NO IN-COUNTRY KC COMMENT ON ANY OF SIHANOUK'S STATEMENTS.
COMMENT: SIHANOUK MAY BE SIGNALLING A WILLINGNESS, WITHOUT
THE CONSENT OF HIS COMMUNIST ALLIES, TO MODERATE HIS LONG-
STANDING INTRANSIGENCE. MANY PHNOM PENH OBSERVERS BELIEVE,
HOWEVER, THAT HE IS SIMPLY TRYING TO CREATE DISSENSION AND
CONFUSION WITHIN GKR RANKS.

9. FANK PROPAGANDA BROADCASTS INSIDE CAMBODIA: (1) LAMBASTED
THE VISITS TO CAMBODIA OF SENATORS THURMOND AND SCOTT AND
UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SECURITY ASSISTANCE CARLYLE MAW,
CALLING THEM U.S. MANEUVERS TO INCREASE ITS AID TO THE GKR;
(2) DEMONSTRATED CONSIDERABLE SENSITIVITY TO AND "CATEGORICALLY
REFUTED" GKR STATEMENTS THAT DRV/VC SOLDIERS WERE KILLED IN
FIGHTING AROUND ANG SNOUL ON ROUTE 4; (3) URGED ALL ELEMENTS OF
THE POPULATION TO RISE UP AGAINST THE GKR; AND, (4) BELLIGERENTLY
ASSERTED THAT KC TROOPS WILL "CERTAINLY AND DEFINITELY
ANNIHILATE" THE GKR "IN THE NEAR FUTURE."

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10. RICE STOCKS ON HAND IN PHNOM PENH ON JANUARY 12
TOTALLED 27,000 METRIC TONS (M/T) OR A 35-DAY SUPPLY AT
THE OFFICIAL DISTRIBUTION LEVEL OF 770 M/T PER DAY.
ACTUAL DAILY DISTRIBUTION DURING THE PAST WEEK HAS AVERAGED
825.8 M/T. STOCKS IN KOMPONG SOM ARE ESTIMATED AT
5,000 M/T. NO RICE HAS COME UP THE MEKONG DURING THE
PAST WEEK. LOCAL HARVESTS IN THE PHNOM PENH AREA PROVIDED
287 M/T OF RICE.

11. ON JANUARY 10, A US-GKR AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED PROVIDING
AN ADDITIONAL \$31.8 MILLION FOR THE COMMODITY IMPORT PROGRAM
(CIP). THE CIP NOW TOTALS \$62.8 MILLION FOR FY 1975. ON JANUARY
14, OTHER AGREEMENTS WERE SIGNED PROVIDING \$20.2 MILLION FOR
PL 480 RICE IMPORTS AND \$8.1 MILLION FOR THE HUMANITARIAN
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. NOTES WERE ALSO DELIVERED TO THE GKR
ADVISING IT THAT U.S. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE EXCHANGE SUPPORT
FUND WOULD CONTINUE IN 1975 AND COMMITTING \$7 MILLION AT THIS
TIME.

12. OVER 20,000 NEW REFUGEES HAVE FLED INTO THE CITY OF NEAK LUONG ON THE LOWER MEKONG SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE COMMUNIST DRY SEASON OFFENSIVE. THE 2,500 HECTARE DRY SEASON RICE PROJECT FOR THAT AREA HAS BEEN SUSPENDED. CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICE AND GKR FIELD WORKERS ARE ORGANIZING RELIEF ASSISTANCE IN THE CITY. CRS IS SUPPLYING AID-FUNDED MEDICINES TO THE HOSPITAL AND PROVIDING FOOD FOR OVER 4,000 REFUGEE CHILDREN.

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P R 141230Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8917

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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13. PRICES WERE VARIED IN PHNOM PENH RETAIL MARKETS DURING THE PAST WEEK. FISH, POULTRY AND FRUITS SHOWED MODEST INCREASES. VEGETABLES FLUCTUATED, BUT WERE RELATIVELY UNCHANGED OVERALL. RICE, MEAT AND LOCAL MANUFACTURED GOODS REMAINED GENERALLY STEADY. THE OFFICIAL (FREE MARKET) EXCHANGE RATE STOOD AT 1,650 RIELS PER DOLLAR DURING THE WEEK. THE BLACK MARKET RATE AVERAGED 1,700 RIELS PER DOLLAR. GOLD SHOWED A MODEST 3 PERCENT INCREASE, FROM \$176 TO 180 PER TROY OUNCE. THE OVERALL PRICE STRUCTURE HAS REMAINED STEADY DESPITE THE KC OFFENSIVE.

MILITARY

14. THE KC STILL CONTROL SEVERAL KILOMETERS ALONG THE EAST BANK OF THE MEKONG OPPOSITE PHNOM PENH. DETERMINED EFFORTS BY A PARA BRIGADE SUPPORT BY DAILY KHMER AIR FORCE (KAF) BOMBING AND STRAFING SORTIES HAVE NOT SUCCEEDED IN ROOTING THEM OUT. REINFORCEMENTS HAD TO BE BROUGHT IN, FURTHERMORE, WHEN AN ENEMY ATTACK CAUSED A FANK BATTALION TO WITHDRAW FROM ONE EAST BANK POSITION. FIGHTING CONTINUES TO BE HEAVY IN THIS SECTOR. NORTH-

EAST OF THE CAPITAL ALONG ROUTE 61, FANK IS MAKING VERY SLOW PROGRESS IN ITS CAMPAIGN TO RETAKE POSITIONS AT
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SIX BRIDGES WHICH FELL DURING THE EARLY DAYS OF THE OFFENSIVE.

15. THE KC HAVE CONTINUED TO FIRE 107MM ROCKETS INTO PHNOM PENH FROM THEIR FOOTHOLD ON THE EAST BANK OF THE MEKONG. MOST OF THE 3-4 DAILY ROUNDS HAVE LANDED IN THE CENTRAL RESIDENTIAL AREA OF THE CITY; SEVERAL OTHERS HAVE FALLEN FARTHER NORTH NEAR THE CENTRAL MARKET AND THE FRENCH EMBASSY. CIVILIAN CASUALTIES ARE MOUNTING. POCHENTONG AIRPORT HAS ALSO BEEN THE TARGET OF REGULAR 107MM ROCKET ATTACKS. THE ROCKETS HAVE ALL FALLEN SHORT OF THE BASE AND CAUSED NO DAMAGE. COMMERCIAL AND MILITARY AIR TRAFFIC CONTINUES. DESPITE THE SHELLING AND SOME ISOLATED TERRORIST INCIDENTS WITHIN THE CAPITAL, THE POPULATION HAS REMAINED RELATIVELY CALM. THERE HAS BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT EXODUS OF KHMER OR FOREIGN RESIDENTS FROM PHNOM PENH.

16. THE KC STILL CONTROL A 15-20 KILOMETER STRETCH OF ROUTE 1 SOUTHEAST OF PHNOM PENH PARALLEL TO THE MEKONG. FANK 2ND DIVISION EFFORTS SINCE JANUARY 10 TO CLOSE THIS CUT HAVE THUS FAR RECOVERED ONLY ABOUT ONE KILOMETER OF THE ROAD. KC PRESSURE AGAINST FRIENDLY POSITIONS ALONG THE MEKONG ITSELF REMAINS STRONG. FANK UNITS ON THE WEST BANK OF THE RIVER OPPOSITE THE CITY OF NEAK LUONG, HAVE BEEN DRIVEN BACK ONTO A BEACHEAD. FANK POSITIONS ON THE EAST BANK ARE HOLDING DESPITE A HIGHER LEVEL OF KC ACTIVITY DIRECTED AGAINST NEAK LUONG AND ITS ENVIRONS. KC CASUALTIES REPORTEDLY HAVE BEEN CONSIDERABLY HEAVIER THAN FANK'S. NEAK LUONG'S SMALL AIRFIELD IS CLOSED AND THERE HAS BEEN A MAJOR FLOW OF REFUGEES INTO THE TOWN (SEE ECONOMIC ABOVE). FANK NAVAL CONVOYS ARE RESUPPLYING THE AREA REGULARLY FROM PHNOM PENH, HOWEVER. THE VITAL MEKONG SUPPLY ROUTE HAS BECOME FANK'S MAIN PROBLEM AREA.

17. THERE WAS RELATIVELY LITTLE ACTIVITY SOUTHWEST AND WEST OF PHNOM PENH. FOLLOWING EXTREMELY HEAVY ACTION LAST WEEK, THE 7TH DIVISION RELIEVED ITS LAST ENCIRCLED BRIGADE POSITION NORTHWEST OF THE CITY ON JANUARY 8. SINCE THEN, IT HAS BEEN SLOWLY RE-ESTABLISH-
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ING CONTROL IN ITS AREA.

18. ELSWEHERE IN THE COUNTRY, ACTIVITY HAS BEEN GENERALLY LIGHT. KC PRESSURE FORCED THE ABANDONMENT OF SEVEN POSTS ON KOMPONG CHAM CITY'S DEFENSE PERIMETER, BUT FOUR HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN RETAKEN. KC ACTIVITY HAS ALSO PICKED UP ABOUT 20 MILES NORTH OF PHNOM PENH ON ROUTE 5 IN THE KOMPONG LUONG-LOVEK-LOUDONG AREA, THE SCENE OF HEAVY FIGHTING IN THE SPRING OF 1974. FANK FORCES HAVE ABANDONED SEVERAL POSITIONS IN THIS AREA, AND KC PRESSURE CONTINUES.

19. BOTH THE KC AND FANK HAVE TAKEN HEAVY CASUALTIES SINCE THE COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE BEGAN ON JANUARY 1. COMMUNIST LOSSES ARE ESTIMATED TO BE ROUGHLY TWICE THOSE OF FANK.

20. KAF HAS CONTINUED TO PROVIDE EXCELLENT SUPPORT TO FANK GROUND TROOPS.
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